

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 IGA-02 AGRE-00 OMB-01

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P 070942Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2470

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8738

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, LE

SUBJECT: PHALANGE PARTY REPRESENTATIVE SEEKS U.S. PL 480 ASSISTANCE

REF: (A) PARIS 33010, (B) STATE 276044

1. DURING INTRODUCTORY CALL BY EMBOFF ON ALEXANDER GEMAYEL, NEPHEW OF PHALANGE PARTY LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL, ON DEC 4, ALEXANDER SAID HE WAS PLANNING DEPART BEIRUT DEC 6 TO VISIT WASHINGTON (AFTER STOPOVERS IN PAIS AND ROME) AND WOULD WANT TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING PL 480 WHEAT FOR LEBANON.

2. GEMAYEL EXPLAINED THAT DURING LEBANESE CIVIL WAR PHALANGE HAD SEIZED WHEAT OWNED BY LEBANESE GOVERNMENT STORED IN BEIRUT PORT AND DISTRIBUTED IT IN EFFORT TO ASSURE THAT BREAD WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO POPULATION AT REASONABLE PRICES. HE ALSO SAID THAT SOME, BUT NOT ALL, OF THIS WHEAT HAD ALREADY BEEN REPLACED THROUGH SYRIAN ASSISTANCE.

3. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED GEMAYEL IF HE WERE GOING TO WASHINGTON AS REPRESENTATIVE OF PRESIDENT SARKIS, GEMAYEL RESPONDED WITH LENGTHY EXPLANATION OF WEAKNESSES OF THE PRESIDENT; HE EXPLAINED HOW, IN HIS VIEW, PRESIDENT SARKIS HAD SO FAR FAILED TO ACT ON LEBANON'S URGENT RELIEF PROBLEMS. HE SAID HIS OWN VISIT TO WASHINGTON WAS STRICTLY HUMANITARIAN AND NOT POLITICAL IN NATURE. EMBOFF DREW CLEAR IMPLICATION THAT, IN FACT, GEMAYEL'S VISIT DOES NOT ENJOY SARKIS' APPROVAL. EMBOFF EXPLAINED TACTFULLY THAT USG WAS INDEED PREPARED TO BE OF ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON BUT THAT WE WOULD OF COURSE DEAL DIRECTLY WITH LEBANESE GOVERNMENT ON SUCH  
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MATTERS.

4. LATER IN SAME DAY, EMBOFF MENTIONED GEMAYEL'S TRAVEL PLANS TO PHALANGE POLITICAL BUREAU CHIEF KARIM PAKRADOUNI. PAKRADOUNI, WHO BELIEVES STRONGLY IN STRENGTHENING ROLE OF PRESIDENT SARKIS IN LEBANON, WAS OF CLEAR OPINION THAT USG SHOULD NOT BE RESPONSIVE SUCH REQUESTS, UNLESS THEY HAVE CLEAR ENDORSEMENT OF PRESIDENT SARKIS.

5. COMMENT: IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GEMAYEL WILL CHANGE HIS APPROACH, OR EVEN GIVE UP EFFORT ENTIRELY, PARTICULARLY IF PAKRADOUNI INTERVENES THROUGH PHALANGE HEIRARCHY. NEVERTHELESS, GEMAYEL MAY CALL ON DEPARTMENT AND/OR AID OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON (EMBOFF GAVE HIM NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF LEBANESE DESK OFFICER NAT HOWELL). WHILE WE SEE NO HARM IN BRIEFING GEMAYEL ON CURRENT STATE OF USG THINKING ON RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION IN LEBANON, HE SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE TREATED AS OFFICIAL REP OF PRESIDENT SARKIS OR GOL, AS HE MAY SEEK TO IMPLY.  
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